

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Town of Broadview Waterline Easement
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer/Fall 2013
Proponent:	Town of Broadview
Location:	Section 16, Township 4 North, Range 23 East (Common Schools)
County:	Yellowstone County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Town of Broadview submitted an application for a 20' wide easement to allow the installation of a 4" underground water line that would serve the Town from two new groundwater wells that have been drilled to the south of the Trust land described as Section 16-T4N-R23E. The proposed easement would generally run along the west section line and parallel Buffalo Trail Road.

Alternative routes were explored by the Town's consulting engineer and the route across the Trust land was the preferred route for a variety of reasons. The water line will be installed at a minimum depth of 6'-6" and will be constructed of High Density Polyethylene (HDPE). One of the new wells is located immediately south of the Trust land, approximately one-half mile south of the Town and the other well is located another mile south of the first well. The Town has historically had problems with both water quality and quantity and these wells may help improve those issues.

The proposed easement route crosses portions of three easements that were previously granted by the State to Yellowstone County (App #14991/D-13530), CenturyLink (App #8106/D-7266) and Triangle Telephone Cooperative (App #11367/D-10315). Permission has been secured by all three of these easement holders for the proposed water line easement to encroach into their existing easement.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

No formal public scoping was performed by DNRC for this proposed project. A Lessee Settlement agreement was obtained from the state grazing lessee. SLO Land Use Planner Jeff Bollman performed a site visit on 10 June 2013.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The Town of Broadview has applied for a Groundwater Beneficial Use Permit from the DNRC Water Resources Division for the two new wells and the review of the application is ongoing by the Billings Regional Office.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Issue a 20' wide easement to the Town of Broadview to allow the installation of a 4" underground water line.

No Action Alternative: Deny the request by the Town of Broadview to issue a 20' wide easement for the installation of a 4" underground water line.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The proposed easement route generally runs along the bottom of the hillside and roughly parallel to Buffalo Trail Road. The water line is proposed to be installed mostly through plowing methods with some selected areas utilizing open-cut excavations. The water line will be installed at a minimum depth of 6'-6". The soils in the easement area generally consist of clay loam and sandy loam, with some areas that may have shallow depth to restrictive features, generally paralithic bedrock. Any disturbed areas will be required to be rehabbed and re-seeded as necessary. Other underground utilities have been installed in this same immediate area and parallel this easement, so no significant adverse impacts are anticipated by the implementing the proposed action.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The easement will cross one unnamed intermittent drainage near the far southeast corner of the section and the water line will be located at least 6'-6" below the bottom of the channel. The water line itself will be served by two new groundwater wells, both of which are located south of the Trust land. The Town has applied to the DNRC Water Resources Division for approval of these new beneficial uses and review of the application is still ongoing. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated by implementing the proposed action.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

There may be short-term isolated impacts from the equipment exhaust that is used to install the underground water line. The entire project is expected to last approximately 2 months. No significant adverse impacts to air quality are expected by implementing the proposed action.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The water line is proposed to be installed at a minimum depth of 6'-6" mostly through plowing methods with some selected areas utilizing open-cut excavations. The easement will require that any disturbed areas be rehabilitated and re-seeded with an approved seed mix, if needed. No significant long term adverse impacts to vegetative cover, quantity or quality are expected as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors and songbirds may traverse the subject sections. The proposed project activities could temporarily disrupt wildlife movement and patterns. Due to the relatively short duration and nature of the project no significant adverse impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A proposed project area search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database identified seven vertebrate animals that are listed as a species of concern or threatened species: Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, McCown's Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and Black-tailed Prairie Dog.

Ferruginous Hawk is listed as a sensitive species and has been observed southwest of the Trust land. The Trust land does generally have the characteristics that the hawk would prefer and may hunt or traverse the Trust land. Based on information in the Montana Field Guide, if there were any ground nests on the Trust land, they would be away from the easement area on top of ridges or other higher elevation spots. The easement area generally stays in the lower elevation areas on the state land. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Burrowing Owl is listed as a species of concern and has been observed west and south of the proposed project area near prairie dog towns. The subject Trust land does not contain habitat that is suitable for nesting, but they may forage or traverse the Trust land, however there are no prairie dog towns on the Trust land. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

Loggerhead Shrike is listed as a sensitive species and has been observed northeast of the Trust land on the opposite side of Highway 3 and the Town of Broadview. No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspur are both listed as species of concern and have been observed on or near the Trust land. The Montana Field Guide does not contain much information regarding habitat and breeding on either species, however the nature (installation of an underground water line) and relatively short duration of the project should not cause a significant adverse impact.

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout is listed as a sensitive species. The trout appear to be located in the Broadview Pond which is located north of Broadview, on the west side of Highway 3. The intermittent waterway that goes through the easement area is not suitable habitat for the cutthroat trout; therefore no impacts are expected.

Black-tailed Prairie Dog is listed as a species of concern. There were three towns identified in the immediate area of the Trust land, two are located to the west and one to the southwest. During a site visit to walk the proposed easement line, there were no prairie dogs or holes identified on the Trust land. Since the proposed project area does not contain an active town, no significant impacts to the black-tailed prairie dog are expected.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

SLO Land Use Planner Jeff Bollman performed a site visit on 6/10/13 and walked the proposed easement route did not locate any cultural resources that warranted further investigation. Therefore, no adverse effects to state-owned Historic Properties are expected with the implementation of the proposed alternative.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed alternative would result in the installation of a 4" underground water transmission line. The only visual evidence that the line exists will be two above ground air relief valves and two yard hydrants. No adverse impacts to aesthetics are expected as a result of implementing the proposed action.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No significant impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy are expected occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other known projects on this parcel of Trust land that would require MEPA analysis by the DNRC.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No significant adverse impacts to human health and safety are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

No significant impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and production are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Implementation of the proposed alternative will have not have a significant impact on the quantity and distribution of employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The proposed action will have no adverse impact on tax revenue.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The proposed alternative has been applied for by the Town of Broadview, so any changes in demand for government services would impact the Town.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Yellowstone County does have an adopted Growth Policy that covers the entire County and the proposed alternative would not conflict with it. In addition, the subject property is not in an area that is zoned by Yellowstone County.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The subject Trust land is utilized by recreationists due to the ability to access it from multiple public roads that run along and through it. Implementation of the proposed alternative will not adversely impact the ability to access the Trust land and should have no or minimal adverse impact on any hunting or other recreational use that occurs on this tract due to the proximity of the easement to Buffalo Trail Road.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No significant adverse impacts to density and distribution of population and housing are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposed alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Implementation of the proposed alternative would not directly impact cultural uniqueness or diversity.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The Common Schools Trust will benefit by getting a one-time fee of \$730 (1.12 acres x \$650/acre) for the Easement area.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeff Bollman, AICP	Date: 25 July 2013
	Title: Area Planner, Southern Land Office	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a 20' easement be granted to the Town of Broadview to allow the installation of a 4" underground HDPE water line that would serve the Town from two new groundwater wells that have been drilled south of the Trust land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant adverse impacts to the Trust land listed above is minimal based on the above analysis and the nature of the proposed action, which is to grant an easement for a 4" underground water line for the Town of Broadview. Additionally, there are no natural features that could produce adverse impacts or any species of concern occupying the Trust land that are expected to be adversely impacted by implementing the proposed action.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐

EIS

☐

More Detailed EA

☒

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Matthew Wolcott
	Title: Area Manager, Southern Land Office
Signature: /s/ Matthew Wolcott	
Date: July 25, 2013	